16 November 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: OTE Unit Chiefs

FROM: STAT

Director of Training and Education

SUBJECT: Pamphlet on "Training for Organizational
                 Excellence" (attached)

In preparation for a training conference to be held
at the conference site in Emmitsburg, Maryland, next week,
OPM has distributed the attached pamphlet on "Training for
Organizational Excellence." I commend it to your reading,
since I believe it spells out some very important points that
apply to CIA in general and OTE and its relationship with other
Agency components in particular.   STAT

Attachment
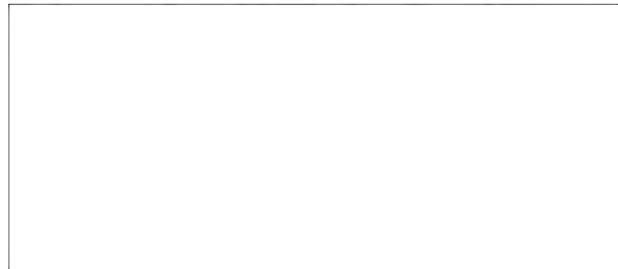
Training
For Organizational
Excellence

An essay by the staff of Zenger-Miller

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Training For Organizational Excellence

Excellence in Perspective

Overwhelmingly, the research on excellent companies shows that they are the result of excellent management. It is not technology, geography, labor pools, government intervention or any other external factor that makes the significant, long term difference. It is the performance of management. It is the individual managers alone in their offices, in one-on-one interactions, and in their roles as group and team leaders, defining and transmitting the values and vision of the organization.[1,2,3]

It is also clear that sustained good management does not just happen. It is the product of planning, development and training. Though it is hard to be conclusive, Tom Peters and Bob Waterman noted that: "There were enough signs of training intensity to state that training was highly related to organizational excellence..."[4] We totally subscribe to their conclusion and wish to go on record as saying that for-**mal** and **informal training processes are one of the chief management tools available to begin immediately achieving excellence.**

In this essay we describe how the best training functions (see note A for definition of "training functions") operate, and what is responsible for their substantial contribution to their organizations. We approach the subject from the vantage point of working with hundreds of training functions in the private and public sector, representing all major industries.

Our hope is that these observations will be valuable to company Presidents and Vice Presidents, Directors of Human Resource Development, Training Managers, and those conducting training programs. We welcome your feedback regarding our conclusions, and invite you to contact anyone within the Zenger-Miller organization to discuss your reactions, your questions, and your ideas.

How The Best Ones Do It

We see ten distinctive practices in the excellent training functions.

1. A Clear Vision of the Goal and Mission of Training

The best training functions are absolutely clear about the distinction between traditional education and the role of industrial training.[5] They see their primary function as giving people practical skills that they can immediately use on the job. Or, they see their task as preparing people for tomorrow's job. Their major emphasis is not education. They teach theory and information where it is relevant to the demands of the job.

The training function's focus is on behavior change that occurs on the job. There is less concern about "awareness" and "insights" and more concern with action plans. To speed up the training process, there is a willingness to demonstrate the right way of doing things.

Effective training organizations see their role as helping to define, clarify and convey the values and culture of the organization. They see training as a prime vehicle for executives to transmit their philosophy and values. Underlying this clear vision of the goal and mission of training is deep and unswerving conviction that training really makes a difference in the daily performance of the organization.

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Some examples are:
- A company carefully defined the competencies that people need in each job. Training was developed to provide these skills. This required a major redesign of many training programs that were more geared to teach information or which had previously not focused on specific competencies.
- A training manager sucessfully avoided falling for the latest fads in training, because he always determined how any new program contributed to the company's major goals or defined needs.
- A director of training remarked, "My people are really tired of hearing theory that they can't apply. They want to know "how to" about that whole parade of daily challenges that come into their office. That's what training is all about." She made "how to" the central focus of every program after recognizing what managers really needed and wanted.

2. Tightly Linked to the Organization's Objectives

The effective training functions keep riveted to their organization's goals[6] They are constantly aware of the mission, goals and the genuine needs of the organization. They stay aware of these in a variety of ways, sometimes informal, and sometimes highly structured and formal. But, they always channel training to the genuine needs of the organization.

Their goal is to contribute to organization excellence, by helping the organization with its immediate goals or training needs. They develop a master plan of training that interlocks with the corporate master plan and tactical objectives. They are systems oriented. They see the big picture.

They also see their role as serving the entire organization, not just some friendly middle managers or easy to reach supervisors. They recognize that the only true organizational change comes from a combined effect of "top-down" and "bottom-up" activity. They do not ignore the top executives, nor do they ignore an engineer who needs training to improve effectiveness in working with colleagues.

To understand their client's needs, the effective training functions burrow into the technical aspects of the business. They work hard to learn the operations, because that is the only way to fully understand the training needs that exist. They are not frightened by technical terminology and realize that a certain degree of detailed knowledge of the business is necessary in order to function intelligently in the organization.

Some examples are:
- Finding out about the goals of the business. From company presentations to security analysts, executive speeches, company reports, and financial statements; they know what is planned for the business. This helps them to know what is important to management, and how the training plan must coordinate with the corporate plans.

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- Getting out of the training office, and spending time with the line managers, supervisors, and individual contributors.
- Discovering the issues that keep top executives awake at night, and applying training to appropriate problems.
- Going to the critics of training, and finding out what needs they have. Effective training groups don't shy away from honest criticism or constructive feedback.
- Frequently following-up on the results of training, to learn what is being applied.
- Involving many people at all levels in an effective, practical, needs analysis process.

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3. Line Management Commitment and Involvement

While all organizations talk of management involvement and support, we suspect that many training functions really receive *permission* instead of true *support*. They are given permission to spend money and take people's time, but real ownership of line management is often lacking.

The top training functions, by contrast, have generated an enthusiastic involvement of line managers. Line managers participate in defining training objectives all the way to the actual delivery of the training.

True support can be measured in a number of ways. It certainly goes far beyond the statements made in the Presidents' letter in the annual report, or from some executive to all of the employees assembled in the cafeteria.

It begins when executives faithfully attend the kickoffs and graduations of all training programs. It comes when a manager insists on knowing whether or not subordinates are attending the training sessions, and clearing the way for them to attend if work pressures are getting in the way.

True involvement comes when managers talk with their employees currently in training programs to find out how they are applying the skills they are learning.

Solid involvement and support is evidenced when management attends special sessions that expose them to the content and the skills of the programs being given to their subordinates. A high level of support comes when upper managers apply the skills being taught in training in their own management practice. For a select few, a final level of support comes when managers conduct training sessions.

Fundamentally, we have discovered that many training groups fail to receive total support because they never really ask for it in specific, precise terms. They ask for "support" and are told that the training function has management's "support". The problem is that "support" is never defined, and while upper management truly believes they are giving it, the training functions believe they are receiving very little.

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In contrast, excellent training functions are precise with management about the support they expect and desire, and therefore, receive far more than their counterparts who are vague and who have low expectations. It all boils down to the fact that the top training functions are outstanding internal marketeers of training.

Some examples of organizations achieving management ownership and involvement are:
- In a computer company line managers are often given temporary assignments in training and development. Such assignments are part of a career development activity for them. Their presence brings status to the function, while they gain valuable skills and perspective. This training department seeks to maintain or expand the stream of line managers coming into their area.
- One company president ensures that people assigned to training are organizational winners. Training is not a dumping ground for organizational "has beens".
- Pilot programs are provided so key managers can personally experience a new training program before making commitments of funds.
- Frequent correspondence is sent to line managers about what is happening to their subordinates who are in training sessions. Managers know exactly the content of training given to their people.
- Line managers are involved in the selection and notification of people attending training.
- Line managers are consulted about what changes they hope to see in their subordinate's performance.
- Line managers conduct training sessions.
- Senior managers speak at evening sessions of a training program for middle managers, to provide executive exposure to them and enrich the training content.
- Senior managers kick-off all lower level training programs and pass out certificates of completion at the end.
- A senior line manager is appointed as a sponsor for every training course. The manager attends throughout and is available to talk with people about their questions regarding company policy or practice.

4. Excellent Management Practice Within the Training Function

The training function in excellent companies practices what it teaches. The budgets are submitted on time. The secretaries answer the telephone efficiently and courteously. Members are willing to take risks and experiment. They accept responsibility and make themselves accountable for a return on the investment the organization makes in training. They are participative in their own management, but hold people accountable for high level performance. They are technically competent and knowledgeable about training content, methods and management.

We often joke about the dressmaker's daughter not having a dress, or the shoemaker's children having no shoes. It is hard for the rest of

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the organization to respect the training department unless it practices the management skills it teaches to others.

Some positive examples we see are:
- a well written annual training plan that can be shown to, and discussed with, any interested party.
- an annual report that shows the number of people trained, the subjects covered, the outcomes of that training, the cost per hour or day, and comparisons to previous years.
- a positive, enthusiastic climate in the department when you walk in and meet people. As one observer said, "You can apply my scientific 'laughter index' to any organization. The healthy ones are ones where people work hard, and there is laughter which indicates that people are enjoying what they are doing."
- A line manager says, "The great thing about our training department is that you can *do* what they *do* , as well as what they say. That department is a terrific example of what every department in this company should be."

5. Emphasis on Practicality

During the last decade, we have witnessed a profound shift away from esoteric, theoretical, complex training.[7] We see a strong movement toward the more practical, concrete, "what do I do on Monday morning" training.

This is especially true of the *content* of training. Rather than lecturing employees on the importance of being customer oriented, the best training functions emphasize simple things like, "answer the phone after the second ring," "call the customers by name," or "return telephone calls promptly." Instead of lectures to supervisors on Maslow's need hierarchy, we see the best training functions having supervisors rehearse the skills of listening, asking questions, clarifying goals, and coaching. Those are the skills that unleash motivation.

Instead of theoretical lessons of middle managers on control and follow-up, we see the excellent training functions teaching managers to agree on specific courses of action with subordinates, and getting agreement on the specified time to get together to determine if things are working better.

Top training functions move toward practical teaching *methods* to teach their practical content. They use techniques that involve simple demonstrations and practice, always keeping in balance the cognitive element of training. They emphasize people leaving with new skills. But, make no mistake, their level of commitment to training is more intense and deep than those with multi-hours of lectures and films.

Top training functions emphasize *relevancy*. If they can not find college courses or commercial training that is sufficiently relevant, many go so far as to establish their own company training facility in which to deliver training. Such centralized training is often dedicated to conveying the values and vision of the upper management, in addition to teaching skills. It is a vivid display of a corporate com-

mitment to training that goes far beyond mere bricks and mortar. Such centralized training sessions allow the company President and Chairman to meet with groups to personally convey their values and philosophy. It allows (even forces) executives to state their convictions and views of the organization's mission.

The top training functions are highly resourceful. They know how to get the best job done, in the quickest time.

The best training functions also know that training is not always the right answer. They know when *not* to train and they resist conducting training programs when the need is for individuals to take action instead of learning new skills.

Some examples are:

● A large corporation brought all managers to a central facility to reemphasize the corporate values and policy that top management wanted to permeate the organization.

● An organization replaced its highly theoretical management training programs with a new system that emphasized specific skills, such as team building, conducting performance appraisals, goal setting, and problem solving skills in groups.

● A large aerospace company wished to improve the presentation skills of executives. They devoted a major portion of their executive program to executives actually delivering short presentations, and having them videotaped for critique by themselves and their group. A second presentation was given later in the session to measure the improvement of each participant.

● A chief executive contacted the training department to "fix" the customer service representatives. They were not being sufficiently courteous to customers. A training specialist proposed that the problem may not be a training problem, but appeared to be a personal motivation problem due to the lack of rewards for courtesy. The trainer proposed that each week the department identify the most courteous customer service representative and have that person's picture posted in a prominent place in the building. Within a month, courtesy noticeably improved.

● A problem solving course had been used for many years and had been well received by managers, but research showed that few people actually used the skills on the job. A newer program was introduced that demonstrated people actually going through each of the steps of the problem solving process. By allowing time for the practicing of these skills in the classroom, the company began to see an immediate increase in the use of the skills on-the-job.

6. Use Multiple Sources To Assist Them

We observe that the most effective training functions do not attempt to design or conduct all of the training themselves. Instead, they see themselves as orchestrators, who marshal all available resources to provide the needed training activity. They are not jealous of line managers' conducting training, outside consultants with spe-

cialized skills, or outside organizations which design instructional systems. They see themselves as the group responsible for making training occur, but not the ones who personally must do it all. Training functions typically suffer from lack of resources against enormous demands and needs. Their only hope to satisfy these needs is to be the catalyst that makes training occur rather than the sole creator and deliverer of training. The pressure of time, costs, and quality often lead to the use of outside resources, rather that internal resources.

This willingness to use appropriate resources inside and outside their own organization allows excellent training departments to magnify their efforts and multiply their effectiveness.

Some examples of this are:
• An organization decided to have all of its supervisory training conducted by line managers, with the training department largely coordinating the activity. The initial results of an evaluation showed that the line managers were obtaining as good as, if not better, results than training professionals. The trainers were freed to deliver other programs requiring highly specialized training skills.
• Ten years ago, less than 30% of large organizations used packaged or "off the shelf" programs as part of their management training. Today, more than 80% use such programs for all or part of their management training efforts.
• An organization needed some specialized technical personnel. They arranged with a local junior college to develop a course to train these people. The company collaborated in the design of the course material and virtually guaranteed employment to the graduates of the program.

7. Consistent Delivery

If a service is to be satisfactory in the long run, it must be of consistently high quality. The same training course often receives rave reviews and strong criticism when different people conduct it. We have observed that the excellent training functions find ways to make training consistent. One approach is frequent monitoring of trainers to ensure uniformity and quality of delivery and content. Another is to emphasize the quality of materials and learning designs. By placing more emphasis on learning designs, materials, and technology; in addition to the trainer, greater consistency may be obtained.

Some examples are:
• One corporation had trainers monitor each other, attending classes or programs taught by others, with feedback offered from the visitor. This developed consistency by having instructors totally aware of what their colleagues were doing.
• Another organization decided to achieve uniformity by emphasizing materials and methodology. They used computer aided instruction and a new "box game" to teach the fringe benefit program to all new employees. It made the learning fun.

8. Sense of Urgency

The effective training functions bring a high energy and intensity to the task. They are less reflective, introspective, and philosophical. They are deeply action oriented and have a desire to get on with things—quickly. They model exactly the same behavior they seek from all managers.

This is in contrast to the following example of non-urgency;

- In a meeting with a government agency in Washington, it was noted that the group was in the midst of doing a needs analysis for supervisory training. An outsider asked the question about the estimated time for completion and approximately how long the project had been underway. The agency employees estimated that it would be another six months to complete; but that no one should be dismayed by that because the project had been going on for at least five years! This is the antithesis of urgency.

The training departments in excellent companies see their primary function as the delivery of high quality training; and, because speed is of the essence, often hesitate to engage in lengthy development work of their own. They want tested products that can be quickly implemented. They never lose sight of the fact that they are being paid for results—now.

Because of that, their training also emphasizes the immediate application of the skills being taught. They have instinctively learned what research has confirmed. If people do not quickly apply what they learn in training, it is highly unlikely that they will ever apply it.

- Some university professors teaching quantitative methods to businessmen learned that a small percentage actually applied what they taught. But, in probing further, they discovered that those who used it had one common characteristic. They began immediately— within a two week period to use the skills. If more time than two weeks elapsed, it became clear that there was little likelihood that change would ever occur.

The sense of urgency of effective training groups, therefore, is in two different areas. They respond quickly with the training applied.

Some examples of taking action are:

- Challenging a marketing V.P. that sales performance of a selling group could be improved to meet important sales targets with team building sessions. The V.P. accepted the challenge, and within six months sales in the two districts involved increased 116% and 208%. Sales in districts receiving no training showed little or no change.
- Telling the Chairman of the Board that the core values of the organization were not reaching the lower levels of management. As a result the organization committed $100,000 for the development of a program that would transfer the core values and desired management practices throughout the entire international organization. The program was being conducted company-wide within a year.

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● Responding to some workers who were highly disgruntled with the behavior of their supervisors. Training began within one month, and the requesting employees quickly noted significant changes in how their supervisors related to them.

● Delivering a program to train the mangement team of a newly acquired chemical production plant, within two weeks of receiving the request.

● Responding to management in 5 weeks with a program to train supervisors with the skills necessary to run effective quality circle meetings.

9. Achieve Critical Mass

Many training departments talk of numbers of training days, and measure their performance on training hours or days conducted. True, we observe that the more effective organizations are doing extensive amounts of training. It reflects their commitments. But, they emphasize a handful of core courses that impact a large percentage of the target population.

At the opposite extreme, we know one organization which has an enormous catalog of courses rivaling a university catalog. These are offered and taught by internal staff or external consultants, and many employees attend several courses each year. (Companies, as well as universities, have professional students). Those organizations with a large cafeteria offering of programs and courses see training as a remedial process for people who are deficient in specific knowledge or skill areas.

This is substantially different from those who view training as a help to new and incumbent supervisors and managers by giving them broad, fundamental skills. It is also different from those who see training as fundamental skills a means of conveying values or achieving organizational goals.

Thus, there is an enormous difference between 500 different training course each having 10 people attend; and 10 courses with 500 people attending each one. Especially, if those 10 courses teach the fundamental, core skills required of people in the organization to function well in their jobs.

For example, if a company wishes to impact its 500 person sales force, it cannot expect to train 15 and have them go back and infect the rest.

Peter Drucker has been reported as saying that he thinks an organization must train 30% of any group in order to impact them in any meaningful way. We totally concur!

Examples of this are:

● IBM's practice of making training mandatory. All managers, after being appointed to a new level in the organization, must attend a training program designed to give them skills needed to function well in that new job. It is also mandatory that they attend the training

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within a certain number of weeks of being appointed. Making this program obligatory impacts the entire population, and substantially influences the organization. That is clearly one approach to achieving critical mass.

● Other companies obtain high levels of participation in training by intensive involvement of line managers or extensive promotion of specific programs directly to the prospective participants.

10. Evaluation of Results

While we do not see **all** of the excellent training functions spending time and money on quantitative evaluation of training results, we consistently see a deep commitment to find practical ways to determine if training is really paying off.[8] They evaluate training using the measures that seem most relevant to the management of their own organization. Meaningful evaluation is always in the eye of the beholder. Therefore, some organizations collect examples of the successes of training. Others rely on line managers to observe the results "on-the-job", and many have personnel on their staff who want controlled studies to more scientifically evaluate the behavior change of participants as a consequence of training.

Some examples are:

● An organization asks everyone who attends training to write up a one page description of the specific skills they have learned and how they will use them.

● A company requests that managers carefully observe their subordinates for two months following the surbordinates' training. Then, managers are asked to document the behavior changes they see.

● A corporation gives questionnaires to the subordinates and bosses of those attending training. Questionnaires are administered before training and after training to measure the change over time. Experimental groups and control groups are used to guarantee that observed changes are the result of training.

● One company develops some basic "bottom-line" measures of training, including production rates and quality measures. They also measure grievances filed, absenteeism, turnover, and tardiness.

As a final observation, we note that not all the high performing training functions do all of the things we have described. Conversely, many training functions do some of these things. But, we observe that the excellent training functions consistently do more of them, do them more intensely, and persist over a longer period of time than their counterparts.

CONCLUSION

Most executives have come to realize that changing organizations is not a matter of issuing a command and having the organization suddenly take on a new course. Instead, the executive is forced to nudge and push and gradually redirect the enterprise.

Limited tools exist to quickly and directly impact the organization. One of the most powerful of these is training. It has enormous potential to influence individuals and the total institution.

But, training fulfills its potential in only a small portion of all organizations. We have presented here the characteristics of those training functions where training efforts excel. We believe they present a valuable model from which we all can learn. To build a top performing training function we must simply learn to behave like the top performers behave.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

Note A:

When we use the term "training function", we include more than the people in the training department. We believe it encompasses:

- The department or group who plan and conduct employee supervisory, management and executive training and development.
- The organization development staff who work with teams and systems.
- The technical training staff and their activities.
- The participation and involvement of line managers in planning and conducting training and development activity.
- The corporate policies and norms regarding training, i.e., is training voluntary or mandatory; is taking time for training important or frivolous?
- The amount and kind of financial and psychological support provided to training by senior management.

Note B:

Zenger-Miller is fortunate to be involved with one-half of the excellent companies defined in the Peters and Waterman study. In addition, we also work with hundreds of other organizations, large and small, in a broad range of industries. Our involvement with them has been as training and organization development consultants, and as suppliers of training systems to these organizations. We are at a close proximity, able to see the inner decision making processes, and witness the involvement of training departments with their line management. We frequently attend sessions with upper management to discuss training.

The professional staff members of Zenger-Miller each considered the question of "What's different about the training functions in excellent companies?" The conclusions stated here represent a consensus of the Zenger-Miller staff about the best training functions, and what differentiates them from others.

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